

Catshill First School

Gibb Lane, Catshill, Bromsgrove, B61 0JP

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. The large majority reach or exceed the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress.
- The teaching has improved very well since the school's last inspection, and this is largely responsible for the significant and sustained rise in pupils' attainment.
- The support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is very well managed and enables them to make good progress towards their learning targets.
- Pupils are well behaved and attentive in lessons. They are keen learners and cooperate well with others when working in groups or with partners.
- Teachers' marking is consistent and effective. It provides good guidance and support to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers and leaders check pupils' learning and progress accurately. The information gathered about pupils' learning is also used well to evaluate the quality of teaching so that teachers are now more accountable for the progress their pupils make.
- The federated strategic leadership team and governing body involving both the first and middle schools have strengthened the management and oversight of teaching. This is sustaining improvements to pupils' learning and the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some more-able pupils should reach higher levels in writing by the end of Year 4. Although improving, pupils' progress in writing is slower than in reading and mathematics.
- Some teaching does not extend or deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- The questions teachers ask in lessons are not always sharp enough to check pupils' understanding, so learning can be adapted in line with their abilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 13 parts of lessons with members of the leadership team and observed eight teachers and some teaching assistants who were teaching at the time of the inspection.
- One of the inspectors met with pupils to discuss their progress in reading, writing and mathematics as well as scrutinising the quality and accuracy of pupils' writing.
- Meetings were held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and with the senior leadership team and executive headteacher of both federated schools (Catshill Middle School and Catshill First School).
- Inspectors spoke to some parents and carers and took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as parents' and carers' responses to school surveys of their views.
- Inspectors scrutinised the arrangements and records kept to safeguard pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation, as well as assessment data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress. The local authority's reviews of the school's improvement and progress were also checked.

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jennifer Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized first school. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class for three-year-old children who all attend part time and two Reception classes for four-year-olds who are taught along with some Year 1 pupils.
- Most pupils transfer from the First School at the end of Year 4 to its federated school, Catshill Middle School. Following a six-month period of soft federation, the two schools formally federated in January 2013. At the time of the inspection the school appointed a permanent head of school who will start in April 2013.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. A small number are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and the largest groups are represented by pupils of mixed heritage. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average (this is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority).
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average (pupils supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs). The main areas of additional needs include moderate learning difficulties, such as speech, language and communication, as well behavioural difficulties.
- The school was last inspected in October 2011 and was judged at that time to require special measures as it was providing an inadequate standard of education. Ofsted has monitored the school three times since this inspection and the last two monitoring inspections judged that the school was making good progress.
- The school has received a number of national awards including Healthy Schools and the Activemark, and it is an Eco school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the improvements to pupils' achievement to raise their attainment in writing further by:
 - making sure that pupils have enough time to self-correct and improve their writing
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to broaden their use of vocabulary and write extensively to reach their targets and higher levels more quickly
 - teaching pupils more effective strategies to improve the accuracy of their spelling when writing independently.
- Increase still further the amount of good or outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure that in all lessons pupils are provided with additional tasks or activities that extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding
 - checking that teachers always set the right level of work for more-able pupils to help them all reach their learning targets
 - improving teachers' questioning during class discussions so they can check pupils' understanding and reshape tasks to improve their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- By the time they leave at the end of Year 4, the large majority of pupils reach or exceed the levels expected for their age in reading and mathematics. The gap between attainment in writing and reading is closing more rapidly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. Although improving, too few pupils reach levels that are higher than expected for their age in writing by the end of Year 4.
- Most Nursery and Reception children start school with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, particularly in language, vocabulary and communication. Consistently strong teaching enables the children to make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. By the time children start Year 1, the large majority reach levels in reading, writing and mathematics that are in line with those expected of five-year-olds.
- Pupils in Year 1 through to Year 4 make good progress overall, building on the strong foundations laid in Nursery and Reception. This includes the small number of pupils learning English as an additional language and pupils of all backgrounds. However, there is still scope to accelerate the progress made by more-able pupils in some lessons as the tasks they are provided with do not always extend or deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 is above average in both English and mathematics, and by the end of Year 4 it is above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Pupils now achieve well over time following a period where they have had to catch up on significant lost ground when the school was in special measures.
- The upturn in pupils' attainment and progress includes those eligible for the pupil premium. The additional funding allocated is used very well to provide carefully tailored interventions and programmes, such as specialised one-to-one support in mathematics and additional, well-trained teaching assistants who contribute along with teachers to improve pupils' reading, writing and calculation skills. Parents and carers spoken to are pleased with their children's progress.
- Teachers' accurate assessments of pupils' progress and performance in English and mathematics show that the average point scores reached by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals compare favourably with the scores of other pupils.
- Achievement is not outstanding because some more-able pupils just fall short of their expected levels, particularly in writing at Key Stage 2. This is partly due to the fact that these older pupils in Years 3 and 4 have had to catch up more than younger pupils following a period of significant disruption to their education in the past which included some inadequate teaching. The teaching is now much stronger and consistent, and this is reversing the trend of underachievement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also achieve well and make good progress towards their learning targets. Increasingly, pupils who are identified as having special educational needs are reaching age-related levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The combination of good teaching and very well managed special educational needs provision means that pupils who find learning difficult or have specific learning difficulties soon gain the confidence and skills they need to read and write independently.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' expectations and learning targets for pupils to aim for are ambitious. There is no inadequate teaching and very little requires improvement. The large majority of the small number of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and those parents and carers spoken to during the inspection are pleased with the improvements they have seen to the teaching.
 - Well-focused training and interventions by leaders have resulted in much improved and accurate assessments of pupils' progress and performance. This has made a significant contribution to the better quality of teaching which is now largely responsible for reversing a legacy of underachievement.
 - Although most of the teaching is good or outstanding, in some lessons the work set for more-able pupils is not always challenging enough. In addition, pupils are not always given enough time to self-correct, edit or improve the accuracy of their independent writing.
 - The most effective teaching, and particularly that which is outstanding, adapts to the needs and abilities of pupils during the lesson. During question and answer sessions or class discussions, for example, teachers who consistently deliver good or outstanding teaching adapt their questions to include more challenging and thought-provoking tasks for pupils to consider. This is not always the case, so learning is not being extended in all lessons.
 - The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is never less than good and is often outstanding. Teachers and support staff are very good at engaging the children and provide appropriately challenging activities for them. There is an excellent balance of adult-directed activities and tasks that children choose for themselves. Activities are particularly effective in developing pupils' language and communication skills.
 - The outdoor area in the Nursery is used very well to encourage children to socialise and communicate. This optimises learning and extends children's thinking through practical, engaging and enjoyable activities.
 - The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is outstanding in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This lays excellent foundations for pupils' early language skills and is responsible for the much improved outcomes seen in the assessments of pupils' progress in reading and writing.
 - The teaching of mathematics has improved well since the last inspection. Pupils are now engaged in more varied and practical problem-solving activities. In some lessons teachers miss opportunities to provide more-able pupils with extended calculation tasks aimed at improving their reasoning skills.
 - Teachers are increasingly providing pupils with opportunities to write independently and at length. Teachers' marking is clear and helpful to pupils and refers to their individual learning targets so that pupils know what to do next to reach higher levels. This sustained improvement is evident in pupils' workbooks, which show a broader range of writing that is improving in both form and structure.
 - There remain inconsistencies in the accuracy of pupils' spelling because pupils are not always being taught enough spelling patterns or strategies to use when writing unaided for extended
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periods of time.

- The use of well-qualified teaching assistants and support staff is very effective in helping those pupils who find learning difficult and those with additional or special educational needs. Teachers are deploying teaching assistants very well to work alongside groups and individuals, and there are also some very effective group sessions in phonics and mathematics that are led by teaching assistants. This is a marked improvement since the school's last full inspection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils treat each other with respect. They cooperate well in lessons and help each other. These characteristics make a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because in a few lessons, some pupils go off task when they are not expected to do enough. However, pupils' behaviour is usually good and is managed well by teachers. Systems for managing pupils' behaviour have improved since the last inspection, reflecting improvements to both leadership and teaching.
- Pupils respond very well to learning in lessons. They are keen to answer questions or contribute to group or class discussions. For example, children in one of the Reception classes were energised and thrived on the opportunity they were given to offer or share words that describe characters in stories or pictures of animals displayed on the interactive display board.
- Intervention programmes and the support provided by teaching assistants are very well managed, optimising the use of funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Most of the money from the pupil premium is spent on additional support staff who are particularly effective in supporting those pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour or who have emotional and learning difficulties.
- Pupils learn a lot about staying safe and healthy. Pupils were able to explain to an inspector the precautions they need to take when using online messaging websites. The school's behaviour and exclusion records indicate that bullying seldom occurs and pupils know what to do if it does. All those spoken to at lunchtime believe that staff deal very well with any rare disagreements, incidents of name-calling or times when pupils upset others.
- The school fosters good relationships and is successful in tackling any form of discrimination in a cohesive and supportive school community. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in attendance rates that are similar to those of most schools.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting head of school and deputy headteacher have improved teachers' use assessment. They have also made teachers more accountable for their performance and the progress of the pupils they teach. The school's improvement plan is sharp with clear measures of success from which to monitor and gauge how well teachers and pupils are doing.
 - The federation between the first and middle schools has been extremely effective. It has enabled the school's leaders to transform what was previously a failing school to one that is now providing a good education. Senior leaders and the governing body now demonstrate that the
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school has good capacity to continue improving.

- Senior leaders have galvanised the efforts of the staff team to bring about stability and much improved teaching. Leaders visit lessons and monitor pupils' progress and performance accurately. This effective level of monitoring provides the basis for guidance and support to teachers and support staff that improve teaching and learning.
 - The executive headteacher is providing clear direction and oversight of the first school and works closely with the head of school. Together, they have put in place effective management structures that provide clear roles and responsibilities for those paid to manage phases of the school or subjects. All teachers who are paid to manage subjects or phases are good or outstanding teachers.
 - The school improvement plan includes a clear diary and route map that guide leaders and governors when monitoring. This has resulted in regular checks of pupils' work and teachers' lessons which have stepped up the level of scrutiny of pupils' progress and staff performance, and is continuing to improve the quality of teaching.
 - The monitoring of lessons and the feedback provided to staff are contributing to a more coordinated approach to professional development and training. However, the focus of these monitoring activities do not always direct teachers to improving the challenge they offer more-able pupils or to improving teachers' questioning during lessons.
 - Leaders have rightly focused their efforts up to now on eliminating all inadequate teaching. This has been successful and provides parents and carers with more reassurance about the continuity of learning for their children after previous inconsistencies when the school was in special measures. Inspection findings show that the teaching has improved very well, standards are rising and school staffing is much more stable. The recent appointment of a permanent head of school adds further stability to the school.
 - The local authority has provided highly effective support. Its advisory service has been particularly helpful in contributing to the appointment of a strong acting head of school in addition to an executive headteacher with very good track record. The local authority set up the soft federation between the two schools which resulted in the formal designation of hard federation in January 2013. The senior management structures involving both schools and the establishment of one effective governing body have resulted in much more stable and robust leadership that has clarity of purpose and good capacity for sustained improvement.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is diligent in checking that it has first-hand evidence of pupils' and teachers' performance. Following federation, both schools have optimised the expertise of the governors to form an effective body that is able to hold the school's leaders and staff to account. Governors manage the school's budget very well and its committees have sharp and effective terms of reference that enable close scrutiny of teaching and pupils' performance. The governing body has ensured that pupil premium funding is used effectively. Governors are monitoring the impact of this funding by using leaders' much improved assessment data. There are now well-established and robust procedures for managing the performance of staff, and these are linked very well to salary progression and the deployment of additional management responsibilities. Governors, leaders and administrative staff ensure that all safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116658
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	410245

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank Fletcher
Headteacher	Gill Ellis (Acting Head of School)
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2011
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